

Week of August 5, 2002: MaineDOT Flash Facts

Topic: Speed Too Fast for Conditions

Monday:

Opener:

- Illegal or Unsafe Speed is a factor in 15% of all crashes, but a factor in nearly 40% of fatal crashes.
- The posted speed limit is one important factor for determining safe speed, but there are other considerations. Here are a few situations where slower speed may be necessary to maintain vehicle control and allow enough time to react and brake safely in an emergency:

How far ahead you can see due to:

- Roadway curves
- Bright sun or nighttime conditions
- Crests in hills
- Inclement weather or fog
- Other sight obstructions
- Wet roads

Adjust your speed so you can:

- Read the road ahead
- React to changing conditions (such as curves, pedestrians, entering traffic, etc.)
- Brake or maneuver when changes on the road occur
(Unfamiliar roads may require further speed reduction)

Wednesday:

Opener:

- Severe Run-Off-the-Road and Head-on crashes are often caused by speed too fast for conditions.
- Weather and road conditions are important considerations to determine safe speed.
- Bad weather requires a decrease in speed and an increase in the distance between you and the vehicle ahead.

Tips:

Rain-

Affects visibility and traction.

Hydroplaning is a concern, especially in heavy rains

Braking and turning are both effected when roads are wet

Fog-

Driving can be very disorienting, even on familiar roads

Drive so that you can stop within the distance you can see ahead

If conditions are so severe that you decide to pull off- pull completely off the road to a parking area. Do not stop on a shoulder.

Friday:**Opener:**

182 fatal crashes resulted from driving too fast for conditions between 1999 and 2001. (About two thirds of these crashes were Run Off the Road and almost another 20% were Head On type.)

Make sure you travel at speeds that allow adequate reaction time and safe control when braking, and turning.

Tips:

In addition to weather and road conditions, here are some other situations where speed should be reduced:

- Highway Work Zones (Lane closures or narrowed lanes, traffic detours, and moving equipment and employees. There are reduced speed limits here, and speeding fines are often doubled.)
- Residential and commercial areas. (Where traffic will be exiting and turning into driveways and intersections.)
- Nighttime (When wildlife is especially difficult to see. Moose and deer collisions are common anywhere in the state.)